

MIOCR MATTERS

A quarterly update on the **Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grant Program**



Corrections Standards Authority

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2007

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2008!

~ The MIOCR Team ~

State Budget Released in Early January. . .

On January 10, 2008, the Governor will unveil his proposed budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year. While recognizing that the state faces a multi-billion dollar budget deficit and that there are many competing priorities for scarce resources, CSA staff for the MIOCR program remains hopeful that funding will continue for the 44 projects supported by this initiative – projects that have already begun demonstrating effectiveness in reducing recidivism among offenders with mental illness. To the extent possible, staff will share information with all MIOCR grantees about the status of funding beyond the current contract end date of June 30, 2008. This communication will commence with an email shortly after release of the Governor's budget proposal and will continue throughout the budget process.



Spotlight on Fresno County's Project for Juvenile Offenders . . .

The Juvenile Justice Mental Health Collaborative project combines mental health screenings and assessments with intensive treatment and services provided through one of two evidence-based models, either Family Functional Therapy (FFT) or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT).

Youth are assessed by using the MAYSI-2 model during the juvenile hall booking process, and those identified as possibly having mental health conditions are referred to the newly developed Behavioral Health Court (BHC). An interdisciplinary BHC team comprised of probation and clinical staff, a Juvenile Justice Services Coordinator, a public defender and deputy district attorney, and an educational liaison determines the youths' eligibility and suitability for the program. The BHC team is led by the Honorable Denise Whitehead, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Delinquency Court.

Youth admitted to the program receive a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation and intensive case management and probation supervision while in the community. The BHC team works with each youth and his/her family to develop an individualized treatment plan for FFT or ACT services, which may include in-home individual and family therapy, medication management, crisis counseling, and assistance with housing, employment, education, transportation and incentives. As deemed necessary, Judge Whitehead orders periodic reviews to monitor the youths' progress, and in each case, the BHC team determines successful completion of, or termination from, the program, which is being evaluated by the Stanford Criminal Justice Center.

"Through the Behavioral Health Court, the juvenile justice system actually accomplishes the goal of protecting the public and positively impacting the lives of young people and their parents," said Judge Whitehead, who noted that several members of the BHC team presented a workshop about the development, implementation and evaluation of the court at the California Administrative Office of the Courts Beyond the Bench Conference in San Diego on December 12, 2007.

"MIOCR has afforded us the extraordinary opportunity to bring together all of the components of our local justice system to focus on the most comprehensive service delivery to those youth in greatest need," said Chief Probation Officer Linda Penner.

Spotlight on Madera County's FACT Project . . .

Hope House began getting new members after Madera County received a MIOCR grant to expand its Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) program, which began with funding from the Mental Health Services Act – and the men and women who began visiting this aptly named facility gained access to support services and social activities that are changing their lives for the better.

"The MIOCR grant has enabled Madera County to expand a service delivery model that has proved effective in reducing institutional recidivism for severely mentally ill individuals," said Director of Corrections Douglas Papagni. "In time, we believe we'll see the same positive results with offenders who suffer from a serious mental illness."

Project participants receive jail discharge planning and community reentry services provided and/or coordinated by a multidisciplinary treatment team comprised of a mental health clinician, two mental health case managers, two alcohol/drug counselors (most of the offenders also have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder), and a part-time peer support counselor. A psychiatrist is available for psychiatric assessments and medication evaluations, and the project is trying to recruit a nurse to assist the team. In addition, a deputy probation officer is supervising participants in the community.

Services include intensive case management, substance abuse counseling and mental health therapy, vocational and employment-related services, and assistance with transportation, housing and other basic necessities of life.

Kudos to Officer Joel Fay. . .

Congratulations to San Rafael Police Officer Joel Fay, PsyD, for receiving the California Psychological Association's Distinguished Humanitarian Contribution Award for 2007! This award honors a person whose career and voluntary efforts have directly and significantly improved the quality of life for a broad range and large number of persons in society. Officer Fay, who is a past president of the Forensic Mental Health Association of California, has been involved with the MIOCR program since Marin County received a demonstration grant in 2000 – and remains one of the most active and vocal supporters of this initiative.

A San Joaquin Success Story

The following story about one participant in another Central Valley project, San Joaquin County's Court for Individualized Treatment of Adolescents (CITA), clearly shows what a difference the MIOCR grants are making in the lives of youth.

In May 2007, a 17-year-old female offender entered the CITA program. At that time, she was just one suspension away from being expelled from her high school. She was agitated and combative with any adult, particularly authority figures such as teachers, probation officers, and her parents. In addition, she refused to consider taking medication for her bi-polar disorder. Her criminal history included batteries against her mother and two stays in juvenile hall, one for a sustained petition in January 2006 and the other for a violation of probation in May 2007.

Although she suffered a brief setback in October 2007, the quick intervention of the CITA Court (led by Judge Michael D. Coughlan), Probation Officer and counseling staff enabled the matter to be addressed and she responded positively. As a result of CITA's involvement, she began regularly participating in individual counseling sessions and family counseling sessions attended by both of her parents. She also began taking her medication regularly, and has made outstanding progress toward her graduation. She is now on track to graduate high school in June 2008, and school staff has been successful in working with the parents and counseling staff when she has exhibited problems. Equally important, she has not had a petition filed nor sustained against her and has not been committed to juvenile hall.

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